United Nations

Centre against Apartheid

Notes and Documents

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW

[Note: The United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa was established in 1967. It currently provides educational and training opportunities abroad to 1,250 students from South Africa and Namibia. Since December 1991, under the terms of General Assembly resolution 46/80, the Programme has initiated educational and training programmes inside South Africa.]

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa (UNETPSA) was established by the General Assembly in resolution 2349 (XXII) of 19 December 1967 by integrating earlier special programmes to assist persons from Namibia, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and the Territories under Portuguese administration in Africa. It is administered by the Secretary-General in consultation with the Advisory Committee on UNETPSA, which was established by the Assembly in resolution 2431 (XXIII) of 18 December 1968. UNETPSA is financed from a Trust Fund, which is made up of voluntary contributions by States, organizations and individuals and which now grants new awards only to nationals of South Africa and to nationals of Namibia for a transitional period, following the country's accession to independence, which will end on 31 December 1992.

The basic purpose of the Programme has been to provide education and training opportunities abroad in a number of priority disciplines to as many disadvantaged South Africans and Namibians as possible so as to enable them to play an effective part in the political, economic and social development of post-apartheid South Africa and independent Namibia. Up until now, all awards under the Programme have been given for study or training outside South Africa. However, under the terms of General Assembly resolution 46/80 of 13 December 1991, the Programme has been authorized to initiate, in an appropriate manner, educational and training programmes inside South Africa.

UNETPSA provides assistance for studies at the higher secondary level, for university education, advanced technical and vocational training, specialized short-term training and internship programmes.

Under an agreement concluded in March 1970 between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Centre against Apartheid, UNHCR provides educational assistance to bona fide refugees up to the first level of secondary education, while UNETPSA provides assistance to them at the higher secondary level and at the undergraduate and graduate level.

Assistance under UNETPSA is granted by means of individual scholarships tenable at established schools, colleges, universities and technical institutions. The general policy of the Programme is to grant awards, in so far as possible, for training in African and other low-cost countries so that as many students as possible can be trained with the limited funds available. Awards in the high-cost countries are provided primarily for advanced degrees at the graduate level in priority disciplines of study with due consideration to returnability and employability.

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I. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAMME

At United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Centre against Apartheid is in charge of the overall administration of the Programme. Day-to-day operational activities are carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Development of the United Nations Secretariat. Away from Headquarters, the Programme is administered with the assistance of the Geneva-based Office for Technical Assistance, Recruitment and Fellowships of the Department of Economic and Social Development and the field offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Decisions on scholarship awards in high-cost countries (in North America, Europe, the Caribbean and Japan), are made by the the Centre on the recommendations of an intra-Secretariat Selection Panel at Headquarters. Final decisions on scholarships in low-cost countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America are also made by the Administration of the Programme at Headquarters but screening, evaluation and nomination of applicants for study in the countries of these regions is normally the responsibility of the UNDP field offices, which are also responsible for the administration of awards in the areas under their jurisdiction.

In addition to the close cooperation it has with UNDP and UNHCR, the Programme maintains liaison with specialized agencies of the United Nations, with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and with other agencies assisting students from South Africa, notably the Commonwealth Secretariat, the African-American Institute, the World University Service, the Institute of International Education and the South African Education Trust Fund of Canada.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee advises the Secretary-General on the following matters:

(a) The strengthening and expansion of the Programme, including, in particular, the promotion of contributions to UNETPSA;

(b) The granting of subventions to educational and training institutions in Africa so that they may provide placement for students sponsored by UNETPSA;

(c) Any other matters concerning the Programme on which the Secretary-General may seek advice.

The Committee, which is currently chaired by Mr. Martin Huslid (Norway), is composed of the representatives of Belarus,

Canada, Denmark, India, Japan, Liberia, Nigeria, Norway, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Venezuela, Zaire and Zambia. Representatives of the Special Committee against Apartheid, UNHCR, OAU and the Commonwealth Secretariat, as well as representatives of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are invited to participate in the Advisory Committee's work as observers.

Funding

The Programme is financed through voluntary contributions in cash and pledges by Governments, organizations and individuals. Total contributions and pledges since inception to 31 August 1991 amounted to $67,797,264. Contributions for the period from 1980 to 1990 alone amounted to $49,164,618. In addition to these contributions, the Programme has often received tuition waivers from universities, especially in the United States and Canada, as well as scholarships in kind from several Governments. Increased contributions during this period have been somewhat offset by rising average educational costs and inflation world-wide.

Application of awards

Between 1968 and 31 August 1991, the Programme received a total of 36,037 applications for scholarship assistance from students from Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe (Territories formerly under Portuguese administration). During the same period, 20,804 scholarship awards were granted under the Programme.

As of 31 August 1991, UNETPSA scholarship holders were studying at educational and training institutions in Antigua, Austria, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Congo, Ethiopia, Grenada, Hungary, India, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Swaziland, Switzerland, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Renewals

As contributions to the Programme are received annually, scholarship awards are also given on an annual basis. First priority is given to extending existing awards, subject to satisfactory academic performance.

II. CRITERIA FOR AWARDS

General

Assistance under the Programme is granted by means of individual scholarships tenable at established schools, colleges, universities and technical institutes both inside South Africa and outside.

Recommendations for the granting of awards are based on academic qualifications of applicants, records, interview reports and relevant information from educational institutions. The Selection Panel also takes into consideration priority fields of study (listed on p. 7) and the career intentions of applicants.

The Programme gives priority consideration to applicants who take a leave of absence from their jobs in order to upgrade their skills, applicants who have community support and those who have secured a firm commitment from an actual or potential non-governmental employer to serve their country of origin upon graduation and thus contribute to its economic and social development.

Moreover, special attention is given to candidates who are financially in need, or may have suffered persecution for their opposition to apartheid and racial discrimination.

Eligibility

Students from South Africa and, until 31 December 1992, from Namibia, are eligible for awards under the Programme.

Age limit

Awards are normally given to candidates between the ages of 16 and 35 years. Applicants above this age group may be considered in special circumstances, especially if the courses envisaged are for short-term advanced training of a vocational nature or for post-graduate studies.

Subjects

Scholarships are granted for education and training in academic, vocational and professional subjects.

Awards are also made available for post-graduate study and research in fields particularly relevant for the development of a

new, non-racial and democratic South Africa, such as information technology (computer science, senior programmers, systems analysts), biotechnology, mining, civil, mechanical and electrical engineering, microbiology, high-level management, law, accounting and medicine.

Priority fields of study and training

Priority fields of study and training include:

(a) Agriculture, including animal husbandry, fishery, forestry and veterinary science;

(b) Economic and social development, including accounting, business management, community development, economic planning, finance, housing and building construction, marketing, urban planning, rural development, social welfare services and administration, statistics and trade promotion;

(c) Education, including educational administration, librarianship, special education and teacher training;

(d) Engineering, including chemical, civil, electrical, industrial, mechanical and mining;

(e) Industrial development, including industrial technology, industrial management and small-scale industry;

(f) Medical and paramedical studies, including dentistry, medicine, medical laboratory technology, nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy and radiography;

(g) Natural resources, including cartography, environmental sciences, geology and meteorology;

(h) Public administration and law; including training of black lawyers, magistrates, etc., for the administration of justice in a new non-racial and democratic South Africa;

(i) Sciences, including biology, biotechnology, chemistry, mathematics and physics, information technology, computer science;

(j) Transport and communications, including journalism.

Country of study

In December 1991, the General Assembly of the United Nations authorized UNETPSA to provide educational and training assistance to disadvantaged South Africans both inside South Africa and outside.

For scholarships that are awarded for study outside South Africa, the policy of the Programme has been to grant awards, in so far as possible, for training in African and other countries where the low cost of education enables the Programme to extend assistance to a larger number of applicants.

The Programme grants a limited number of partial scholarship awards for study in high-cost countries (in the Caribbean, Europe, North America as well as Japan). In considering such awards, the Programme gives priority to applicants at the level of a master's degree, and exceptionally to applicants in the last two years of study at the level of a bachelor's degree in a professional field (engineering, teacher's training, etc) and if a tuition waiver has been obtained. Finally, partial awards in high-cost countries are available for applicants pursuing Ph.D. programmes, in such fields as information technology, management, medicine and dentistry, biotechnology, etc., and also for short-term specialized training courses. Priority in high-cost countries is largely limited to the following broad areas of study: information technology, biotechnology, engineering, medical and paramedical studies, teacher training, business management and community development-related fields.

Financial needs

Scholarship awards can be either full or partial, depending on the financial needs of the candidate and other relevant circumstances. However, in order to reduce costs and enable the Programme to assist as many applicants as possible, UNETPSA, as a general rule, provides only partial assistance for study in high-cost countries.

Travel

A scholarship award outside South Africa may include travel expenses to the country of study in Africa only. All graduates of the Programme are entitled to grants for repatriation to South Africa or Namibia within 12 months of completion of their studies.

Dependants

No funds are available under the Programme for the maintenance of the families of scholarship holders.

Duration of awards

Scholarships are granted for one year or less in the first instance, with expectation of renewal, subject to evidence of satisfactory academic performance.

Where to apply

The Programme can only consider applications that are complete, including the letter(s) of acceptance at the school(s) of the applicant's choice.

Applicants intending to pursue their studies in the Americas and Japan should forward their applications to:

Department of Economic and Social Development
Fellowships Service
Room DC1-1568
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
U.S.A.

Applicants intending to pursue their studies in Europe should apply to:

Department of Economic and Social Development
Technical Assistance, Recruitment and Fellowships Office
United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Applicants intending to study elsewhere should apply to UNDP offices in the intended country of study or in their country of residence.

III. OPERATIONS OF UNETPSA FROM 1980 TO 1991

The main trends in the development of the Programme for the period from 1980 to 1991 can be seen from the table reproduced below:

Reporting period	Number of new awards	Number of awards extended	Number of scholarship holders
1980/81	97	1 043	1 140
1981/82	53	813	866
1982/83	263	545	808 a/
1983/84	410	486	896
1984/85	318	611	929
1985/86	504	605	1 109
1986/87	838	560	1 398
1987/88	607	751	1 358
1988/89	95	1 113	1 208
1989/90	542	658	1 200
1990/91	648	630	1 278

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a/ During the reporting period 1982/83, in accordance with a recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Programme, it was decided that awards financed under the United Nations Fund for Namibia would no longer be included in the annual report of the Secretary-General on the Programme.

Of the 12,190 scholarship awards granted by the Programme in the period from 1980 to 1991, 8,250 were for South Africans, 2,904 for Namibians, 959 for Zimbabweans and 77 for students from the Territories formerly under Portuguese administration in Africa. The last UNETPSA students from the latter group of countries completed their studies in 1983, while the last UNETPSA Zimbabwean students graduated in 1987.

In accordance with its terms of reference, the Programme will continue to grant new awards to Namibian students until 31 December 1992. The Programme will continue to sponsor the Namibian students already on board and those selected for awards in 1992 until the completion of the academic programme for which an award has been granted.

In 1989, the Advisory Committee felt that, in view of the imminent independence of Namibia and changing circumstances in South Africa, there was a need to evaluate the work of the Programme as a means of preparing it to meet more effectively the development needs of an independent Namibia and a future post-apartheid South Africa. The evaluation was undertaken by an independent expert between September and December 1989. The Advisory Committee subsequently adopted a series of recommendations based on the evaluation report which are now being implemented by the Programme.

In accordance with these recommendations, the Programme has made serious efforts to increase its intake of students from inside South Africa. The Programme is also showing greater concern for the returnability and employability of its graduates, which are both key factors for the achievement of its objectives, and have now become basic criteria in the selection of applicants and the granting of awards. The recent expansion of the Programme's cosponsorship of projects, and cooperation with scholarship agencies, educational institutions and foundations as well as with government and intergovernmental agencies has allowed it to become involved in more forms of training than it could have arranged on its own. These co-sponsored projects, which involve small contributions from the Programme, have led to the training of a larger number of students from inside South Africa whose return and job placement by the co-sponsors in South Africa is guaranteed.

During 1990/91 the Programme renewed existing arrangements and initiated new projects with organizations including the African-American Institute, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Education Development Trust of South Africa, the Institute of International Education, the Phelps Stokes Fund, the South African Education Trust Fund of Canada, the Southern African Freedom through Education Foundation, the Council on International Programmes, the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, as well as a number of other universities and educational institutions.

The Programme is currently allocating greater resources to cooperative arrangements aimed at institution-building inside South Africa through the strengthening of the education management capabilities of Black and other institutions of higher learning and the training of their graduates and junior faculty. In this connection, the Programme is currently cosponsoring a graduate student and junior faculty enhancement programme through short-term training courses abroad in cooperation with the African-American Institute and the University of the Western Cape and is looking into ways to expand this programme to other Black universities. It has also expanded its short-term training projects with built-in returnability and employability, including courses for trade union organizing, administration and

management, community development, small business development, business management and project planning.

The Programme has carried out a number of measures to promote the returnability and employability of its graduates. The Programme is in touch with a number of public and private corporations, scholarship agencies and educational organizations which can assist its graduates in obtaining professional work experience in the United States of America, Canada, Europe, Japan and some African countries so as to increase their level of skills and facilitate their entry into the job market in South Africa and Namibia. Contacts have also been established with the private sector and professional associations which control access to jobs so as to help facilitate the job placement of UNETPSA graduates in South Africa.

UNETPSA will continue its outreach programme to help its graduates gain access to job opportunities commensurate with their level of skills and expertise. However, it seems that one effective way to improve the returnability and employability of students sponsored by UNETPSA and other educational programmes would be a combined approach by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations concerned, professional associations and individuals to use their influence and leverage inside South Africa.

Such concerted efforts are critical to the ultimate effectiveness of the Programme which will be judged not only by the number of graduates it sponsors but also by the impact graduates will have on the political, economic and social development of South Africa and Namibia.

In line with the recommendations contained in the evaluation report, the Programme continues to pay special attention to meeting the need for the upgrading of the basic skills of applicants. During the 1990/91 academic year, under a co-sponsorship agreement with other agencies, UNETPSA has provided remedial and secondary education courses, and arranged for vocational training and attending workshops for skills enhancement in several African countries. These include 335 awards and workshops co-sponsored with the Commonwealth Secretariat in Botswana, Namibia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe and 68 awards for students from within South Africa who are pursuing 'O' and 'A' level programmes in Zimbabwe, co-sponsored with the Education Development Trust of South Africa.

Moreover, the Programme is now increasing the number of awards in African and other countries, including South Africa, where the lower cost of awards makes it possible to sponsor a larger number of students. During the academic year 1990/91, 75 per cent of scholarship holders pursued their studies in low-cost countries.

In the execution of its mandate, the Programme has maintained close cooperation with UNHCR, UNDP and the specialized agencies.

IV. TASKS AHEAD

Since the establishment of UNETPSA, which has been commended by the General Assembly as a genuine and most valuable international humanitarian effort, over 7,000 award holders have completed their studies under its sponsorship. The majority of them have already returned to southern Africa. Many Namibian graduates of the Programme are currently making an important contribution to Africa's newest independent State. Now that major forces both inside and outside South Africa have committed themselves to a negotiated settlement of the conflict, it is expected that hundreds of South African graduates, who have received education and training abroad under the sponsorship of UNETPSA and other scholarship agencies, will return home. It is hoped that this relatively large cadre of competent personnel, together with those who have already returned, will be able to put their skills, training and experience to work and thus enhance the prospect for a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The Programme's main goal now is to effectively contribute to South Africa's human resources development, particularly in the short- and medium-term. The Programme will strive in particular to train disadvantaged South Africans inside South Africa in the priority fields of the Programme so that they may take up high- and middle-management level jobs in their respective areas of expertise. Several training programmes, including the training of 50 black lawyers, have been initiated in 1992.

In order to contribute towards meeting South Africa's manpower requirements, an International Conference on the Educational Needs of the Victims of Apartheid in South Africa was organized jointly by the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNETPSA, in Paris between 25 and 27 June 1991.

The Paris Statement on International Assistance to the Victims of Apartheid in the Fields of Education and Training, adopted by the Conference, called on the South African authorities to address urgently the education crisis by taking appropriate political, legal and financial measures. It also called upon the international community to assist towards that

end and outlined ways and means whereby international assistance could be provided in order to help alleviate the current education crisis and contribute to the formulation and implementation of a human resource development strategy for South Africa.

Following the Conference, UNETPSA was designated as a focal point for liaison and coordination amongst bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes for Black South Africans. UNETPSA has been for many years one of the largest intergovernmental scholarship programmes for South Africans, with broad support from and access to all States Members of the United Nations as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations involved in providing educational assistance to young South Africans. It is therefore ideally placed to carry out this coordinating function at this critical juncture in the life of the country.

As proposed by the Paris Conference, a meeting will be convened at United Nations Headquarters in 1992, under the auspices of UNETPSA, to facilitate an exchange of views as well as co-operative activities of major multilateral and bilateral educational programmes and donor countries.

UNETPSA, through its numerous activities and programmes, is an important component of international efforts aimed at providing the human resources needed during the transition to a new, non-racial and democratic South Africa and beyond.